/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[281] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[914] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
433 cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
[031] foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
[541] beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
233 their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
[556] what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
● [262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
4 [178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/17 cont./

342 newly-married couples. The poor sometimes have only one
[585] small house.

The ordinary daily food of the Abkhaz consists of cheese,
262 corn bread, ghomi, and sour milk. The ghomi is prepared with cheese (aelagzh), or with milk and cheese (achamukhkua). In winter the Abkhaz contents himself with cooked meat; goat's meat is preferred. Doing without wine is no problem to him as long as there is sour milk. The Abkhaz hates crawfish; formerly he also disliked fish, but is now gradually becoming accustomed to eating it; there are also certain vegetables that are not eaten,
[263] but the Abhaz likes food that is spiced with bitter herbs and pepper, etc. For occasions of prayer cone-shaped loaves of bread are baked, which are later boiled, in water during Lent and at other times in milk. These loaves are called arvazha.

592 The rights of seniority are strictly observed in the Abkhaz family. All the members of the household obey their pater familias (avn aihab). In the family everything is done according to his orders and wishes; only in matters concerning women does the oldest woman in the family (avn eihab aphs) take command. The younger members always act according to the instructions of the older ones, but if a younger member of the family is cleverer or more experienced than one of superior age, then for all practical purposes things are arranged according to his wishes and instructions.

The oldest (man and woman) in the home perform all re-
[888] ligious rites and prayers. The oldest man also performs all
[593] family rites. Sons take care of their aged parents with great love; they usually do not leave the parental home as long as the parents are alive. If a separation takes place, the parents are
428 given half of the entire property. In case the property is divided
[592] between a mother and her sons, the mother gets, in addition to her dowry, a share equal to that of each of her sons; she then /18/ settles with one of her sons, as she sees fit. The oldest brother is alloted a special share for his seniority (aihabshakhu). If there are many cattle, this special share will consist of one head of each kind of cattle; if there is not much, then only one, the best, is given. The youngest brother also gets a special share

/29 cont./

765 the table at every breakfast and supper.

On the fortieth day, or on one of the Saturdays, the mourning banquet for the deceased is held. A ram is killed and meat dishes are prepared. The relatives of the deceased, who up to [785] this time have been fasting, do not break their fast until this day. The mother and the foster mother, however, fast for a whole year.

The second mourning-banquet involves even greater expenditures. This banquet is called aphskhuvra /see foreign text/ (1).

1. aphs = soul; khu = lot, order; vra = to do, to carry out; i.e., the giving of the banquet in honor of the soul of the deceased.

On this occasion animals are killed, much is spent, and an effort is made to satisfy the soul of the deceased as well as possible. [795] The Abkhaz are convinced that an unsatisfied soul can harm not only their property, but also themselves. This banquet is held in the second year after the death of the departed, more often in the autumn when there is an abundance of everything.

For the day of the aphskhuvra guests are invited to bewail the deceased. Sometimes marula (horse-races) are also organized [541] on this same day in honor of the deceased. If the races have been [202] planned beforehand, everybody is informed in good time by messengers. Meanwhile the hosts are preparing ample supplies of provisions, animals, wine, cheese, bread, etc. On the eve of the aphskhuvra, the belongings of the deceased are on display, and the horse of the departed is tethered near them, covered with a mourning blanket. The deceased's weapons are hung on the saddle of his horse, his rifle, pistol, dagger, saber, whip, etc.; subsequently there is lamentation at the grave with the remains.

And then this scene takes place: a crowd of people of both [302] sexes stand around, barefoot and in mourning. The men's hair is braided, as is the women's. People on foot and on horseback [260] approach them, each of them leading one or two bulls, or a few

/29 cont./

765 rams, and, in general, whatever they can afford; furthermore
[262] they bring various sweetmeats prepared with butter and with honey, and also matsoni (sour /30/ milk), etc. One person in the procession holds in his hand a branching, tree-like candle, to which is fastened a strip of calico, green in color and soaked in wax. At the ends of the larger and smaller branches similar strips are hung, which are stirred by the wind like the leaves of a tree. (If the procession takes place at night, a few lighted candles are fastened to the branching candle as well as to the horns of bulls). Slowly the sad procession approaches the house and enters the yard, where it is met by the others. Here there is wailing and lamentation by the men and women separately.
[782] After this the bulls and rams are killed, each with the words, "It is offered to your soul."

The next day, i.e., on the day of the aphskhuvra, a great number of people gather. By noon one of the relatives of the deceased unties his horse and stands in the middle of a meadow, while the men and women form a circle around him. Then the horse is led around the circle three times, with the deceased's next of kin following behind, barefoot, bare-headed, in mourning attire, and weeping bitterly. The men beat their breasts and faces. The women stand in a circle divided into two groups alternately crying "avav." This ceremony ends with the horse being led out of the circle. From this time on, all earthly signs (remains) of the deceased are considered to have been destroyed; up to this time the deceased has been considered to be invisibly present in the gathering.

After this the guests seat themselves at a dinner. On the meadow, under the open sky, a long tablecloth has been spread out for them and various dishes have been prepared. Particularly
[262] noteworthy are spoons, cups, glasses, thimbles, etc. made out of cheese. The candles described above are placed there, too.

It must be noted that even though this banquet involves great expense, it is not burdensome to the hosts, since the expenses are shared, not only by the relatives, but also by the whole village where such a funeral repast is held.

/44 cont./

7.

782
585
[776] The Prayer Ceremony in Honor of Azhahara

The Abkhaz call the protector or genius of the house and hearth by the name Azhahara in whose honor is performed the ceremony for a young married couple in the stage of their marriage before they have appeared together before their elders and the young woman is for the first time led into her husband's main house, or when the bride is invited into her father's house. One of the oldest members of the family sticks pieces of the heart and liver of a sacrificial animal on a spit and begs Azhahara to protect the young couple at home and out of doors.

8.

Alishkantra

782
231
[776] Alishkantra is the "mistress" of dogs. In the opinion of the Abkhaz, the owner of good dogs will also be fortunate in the multiplication of his cattle; good fortune in dogs is associated with good fortune in all domestic animals. Therefore before praying to other god-protectors of domestic and wild animals, the Abkhaz prays to Alishkantra to grant him luck with good dogs and the opportunity to raise and breed them.

9.

/45/ A Prayer in Honor of Zhabran

[776] Zhabran is the protector of animals. Every Abkhaz
[796 owning cattle performs the prayer-ceremony in his honor
262] on "Cheese Saturday." For this they prepare suluguni (a big cheese) called "sacred cheese"; bread dough is placed on the hearth, in which a man puts a core of suluguni, whereupon he prays, "Prefer me to all those pronouncing your name;

/56 cont./

579 782 all this is hung on trees near the place where Eyrig-aatsnykh is believed to have his permanent abode.

22.

Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh

776 Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh is worshiped as the mightiest [778] of the gods. Mt. Dudryuphsh is regarded as his abode. Those who dare to climb this mountain are immediately punished with blindness; therefore prayers and sacrifices to this deity are offered at the foot of the mountain. As a deity, Anybs-nykha has no exclusive, professional field of authority, but he is worshiped as higher and mightier than all the other gods. [782] The arrangement of prayers and sacrifices to him is the same as to Sha-sha, with the difference that when an oath is taken in his name, the formula is "May Anybs-nykha send me blindness and every ailment . . . ., "etc.

778 Anybs-nykha's residence is under the exclusive supervision of the large Abkhaz family Ankhaë-Chichba. The [823] Chichba have enjoyed this right for several generations; it is a source of great profit to them, since permission to bring sacrifices to this deity must be bought from them with presents. Not far from the top of Mt. Dudryuphsh, the actual abode of Anybs-nykha, a stone lies under an oak; on this stone the image of the Holy Virgin has been carved. All those who [782] take an oath must put a coin or something metal under this stone, and woe to him who is tempted to take anything away, even one little thing, from among the objects lying there!

23.

/57/ Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

782 [796] On Christmas Eve in every family chickens are killed [962] and four kvakvari (small loaves of bread stuffed with cheese)

/57 cont./

[782] [796] [262] are made for each member of the family. The chickens must be fried and the kvakvari baked before cockcrow. Just after the first cockcrow the master of the house puts bowls on the table, into each of which he puts a chicken and four kvakvari; to each one he fastens a wax candle. A brazier with coals is placed near the table. All the members of the family kneel down around the table, each opposite his bowl, [789] and the eldest person in the family, after removing his cap and throwing incense in the brazier, asks God to preserve him and his family from stomach disorders. After the prayer, all rise, turn to the right, and bow to the east; then everyone eats his portion, and each does his best to finish the meal without fail before dawn.

[796] [262] On New Year's Eve, after supper, a prayer is again offered in each family to ask for all sorts of blessings. For this occasion a rectangular pie is prepared, stuffed with cheese; this is put on a board to which a wax candle is fastened. The whole family kneels around it, and the eldest in the clan throws incense on the coals and says the prayer; then the pie is eaten and the leftovers burned on the coals. This prayer is called Kalinda. On the first day of the New Year the prayer called Günykhva (prayer of the heart) is [262] offered. For this, a small loaf of wheat-bread stuffed with an egg is prepared for each member of the family. The head of [789] the family raises a loaf to the breast of each member, praying to God to preserve them from heart ailments. After the prayer, each one eats his loaf.

24.

Drought

731 789 During a severe summer drought all the village girls gather in their best attire near the river. They divide themselves into three groups and make a raft of branches, cover this with straw, and make a doll, which they then dress up as a /58/ woman. When all these preparations are finished, a

A 267 [760] Food. The daily dishes of the Abkhaz are cornmeal mush (abysta), which is eaten with strips of cheese instead of a spoon, sour milk, and millet prepared with cheese (aëladž) or with milk and cheese (atsamukhkua). In the winter they often eat meat, A [263] especially goat. As everywhere, red pepper, garlic, and bitter herbs serve as seasonings. The women cook cone-shaped breads (arvasa) in milk for festive days and in water during fasts.

B 267 Like the Abkhaz, the Cherkess like to eat raw cucumbers with butter, salt, and red pepper, cooked young pumpkins, carrots, wild asparagus, dandelions, and other vegetables; also much rice and thick, stiff mush (pasta) made of wheat grains cooked without salt; formerly it was more often made of unhulled millet (pasta) or hulled millet (hatlama). Flat cakes (medžaga) of ground millet were also baked. Mutton and beef is often eaten with a gravy of sour milk and grated garlic (tusluk) or of honey and butter (fau'tgo). Sour milk (škau), curds, and cheese fill out the daily fare. Festive dishes are: spelt noodles with diced, hardboiled eggs, curds, sour milk, some butter, onions, and garlic (khinkal); flat cakes of wheat flour, eggs, and milk, simmered in butter (širaldama); small cakes of the same dough filled with curds and onions or with honey (haliva), dried apples, apricots cooked in wine and honey, and other fruits, etc.

A C 272 273 Festive drinks are: whisky (arka, fada fitsa = black F.), mead (fada pliš = red F.), millet beer (fada khuš = white F.), honey water (fau'uš), cooked cider with added honey, raisins, and blackberry juice, beer (šür), light and heavy wines from wild and cultivated grapes.

A 594 Society and family. As among other mountain peoples (see p. 732 [untranslated]), so also among the Abkhaz the father (awn aihab) and the mother (awn aihab ap's) of the house manage A 597 the affairs of the kin group [Sippe] and perform the cult ceremonies. They have a peculiar custom: an adult can be adopted by another kin group as though he were a child if he has kissed the mother of the house on the breast three times.

C 565 Up to 1866 the same positions existed among the Cherkess as among the Osset: princes (pši), noblemen (work), who were followers of the former in battle, those freed by the princes

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

which is *Khetsia*.[1] He has one sister from whom descends the demon family; that is why *antswà* has no right to destroy once for all the demons, his blood relations.

The Abkhasians appear to have made their gods after the image of man; one and the same god can be both good and evil in relation to a given person, according to the zeal with which he fulfils his duties towards him. The only means by which an angered god can be placated is by open-hearted confession and sacrificial offerings. And as the Abkhasians have a great number of gods their whole life is passed in continuous prayer and offering to gods.

I. ÀYT'AR-NƏ̀H̲WA*

1. *Jabrán*

The Abkhasians make preparations for Shrovetide with particular solemnity, for its approach coincides with the observance of a series of religious rites and offerings, known under the general name of *Àyt'ar-nə̀h̲wa*. Àyt'ar is a great god of procreation and fertility, particularly with regard to the breeding of cattle. He is, as we shall see presently, the head of a whole pleiade of gods, who appear to be subordinate to him, and each of whom constitutes a part of him. *Nə̀h̲wa*, which is derived from *a-nə̀h̲wara*, to pray, denotes praying, prayer, whence *Àyt'ar-nə̀h̲wa*, meaning prayer, offering, to Ayt'ar.

The first in order of offerings is that performed in honour of the god *jabrán*, i.e. god of the goats (and sheep) (see above, p. 120).

On the Sunday, the last day of Shrovetide, the eldest woman of the family leavens dough from the flour of *ashə̀* (Georgian *shvria*, oat)[2] and places it in a warm corner. The dough is often kneaded with a stick, called *adsw̲ə̀*,† made specially for this purpose from the hazel tree, on account of which the dough itself is called *adsw̲ərəsa*, a combination of *adsw̲ə̀*, a stick with a tapering end, and *ərsara*, to knead.

On the Shrove Thursday the eldest woman of the family—*ap'h̲wəs-tsh'ya* ("woman pure")—takes a portion of this leaven, kneads it with the stick, adds some water and flour, boils it, and then bakes maizebread—*amgyal*. This maizebread must be baked on a hearth.

* For the pronunciation of "h̲" see p. 119, n. *. The combination "h̲w" represents a labialized variety of "h̲". [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† The combination "d̲sw̲" which is to be pronounced with one breath impulse, represents a labialized variety of "d̲s". For this latter sound see p. 329 (s'). [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] N. Y. MARR, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian), in *Khristianskoe Vostok*, "The Christian East," St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 138.
(A translation of this work is given in this number, pp. 157–180, see p. 171. Ed. *Georgica*.)

[2] It should be noted that in all these sacrificial offerings oat flour and, on rare occasions, millet flour, is used. Without this flour or unless it is at least used as an ingredient the offering becomes inadmissible. The reason for this is probably because *ashə̀* (and *ghomi*, millet) alone constituted the staple food.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

When the woman places the dough on the hearth, she holds over it a pure *sulguni* (a round of cheese),[1] from the centre of which she cuts out a small round piece and places it in the middle of the maizebread; with the exception of this middle part, the maizebread is lenten. When placing the dough on the hearth, she scatters bits of it, first in the direction of the sea, and then towards the mountains; and, as if calling to the goats, she says, *reyt, reyt* (the goat call), and mutters the following prayer: "Thou, *jabràn*, the great part of the great god (*Àyt'ar intswakhwodù jabràn*)! Grant us the warmth of thine eyes and of thy heart. Be the guardian of our herds! Bear goodwill unto us so that no harm should befall our herds, except their old moulted wool and old dung!" Apart from this introduction, which is always used, each says an improvised prayer. After this is over, as if calling to the goats they again exclaim, *reyt, reyt*, turning alternatively towards the sea and the mountains.

When the maizebread is baked, and the goats have returned from the fields, the eldest man in the family prays to god *jabràn*, muttering approximately the formula quoted above. The whole family joins him in uttering *dămen*, and the candles are lighted.

It is to be noted that during the prayer the participants also invoke the "god" *mkyamgaria*,* and say: "May thy bounty never fall short on us." It seems to me that this deity is no other than the "Megrelianized" angels Michael and Gabriel (Geo. *Mik'el da Gabrieli*), with whom Christianity endeavoured, in vain, to replace Àyt'ar and his "parts" of gods; up to this day the pagan deities still take precedence, although they also pray to *mkyamgaria*.

The maizebread is first cut into four parts with two strokes of the knife, and only afterwards into small pieces; the neighbours are not forgotten either, a piece being sent to each. The maizebread is baked in rhododendron (*d-k'wazhwe*)† leaves.

2. *Zhwabràn* (god of cows)[2]

This rite is performed in the same manner as jabràn. The prayer begins thus: "Thou *zhwabràn*, the great part (of the great deity)

* The palatal or mid-lingual semi-vowel "*y*" in "*k'y*", "*gy*", as also in "*ky*", "*qy*", "*shy*", "*qy*", etc., met with in this article, lingualizes or iotizes the preceding consonant sound, the combinations "*k'y*", "*gy*", etc, representing lingualized or iotized varieties of "*k'*", "*g*" (pronounced hard, as in "go"), etc. For the pronunciation of simple radical sounds see p. 328. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† See p. 131, note *.

In Abkhasian *dtshyazhwe*, pure cheese; cf. Megrelian (I. Kipshidze, *The Megrelo-Russian Dictionary*, s.v. *sad'ari*) *tsh'obe*, which is also an Abkhasian expression, denoting "pure (*a-tsh'ya*), good (*d-be*)".

[2] In Guria this observance is known under the name of *boslobe* (an abstract form of *bosli*, cowhouse) or *ilorobe*; the latter probably has some connection with St. George of Ilori. The Gurians often call a cow *ilora*. In Megrelia the god of cattle-breeding is known as *Zhini-Ant'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhaz RI3
Adzvibzha

Àyt'ar!" etc. The dough is kneaded from the same leaven, only when calling to the cows they exclaim *wootsw*. Shrove Saturday is dedicated to *zhwabrdn*.

3. *Anəkha-nəĥwa* (*Dopu-nəkha*)

Near Adzvibzha is a little village called Dopukət, where dwell the Dopua-s who are attendants (Geo. *me-khat-ur-s*) of the "icon"—*Dopu-nəkha*, revered by all the Adzvibzhaans and Dopukətans. This "icon" is known also as *shwəjən-nəkha*, i.e. Sujuna icon, under which is meant, no doubt, St. George of Sujuna in Megrelia. This "icon" is called *zhwardk'yə* by the wives of the Dpua-s, for the reason that the wives of Abkhasians have no right to call by name the eldest members of their husband's *gvari*, or his relations. D. I. Gulia thinks that the word *zhwarak'yə* is the same as the Georgian *zvaraki*, meaning sacrificial animal (the ancient Georgian *zuaraki* = *zowaraki*, Armenian *zowarak*).[1] In honour of this "icon" every Adzvibzhaan and Dopukətan family bakes, on the Shrove Sunday, a cake from millet flour (*sorghum*, in Geo. *ghomi*), which is offered as a gift to it. Prayers are said by the head of each family, and a handful of salt and a piece of wax candle are put aside for the "icon". The eldest of the Dopua goes round the houses and collects the salt and wax.

Mamsər Dopua told us: "At the present time our icon is in the village Sujuna."

4. *Àyt'ar-nəĥwa* (*khwazhwə-kərd*, in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərd*)

On the first Monday[2] of the Great Fast the ritual of supplication to Àyt'ar himself is observed. This supplication is otherwise called *khwazhwə-kərd* (in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərd*). *À-khwazhwə* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) is a special cake, sometimes coniform, and sometimes of round flattened shape. These cakes, which may be stuffed with cheese or not, but on this occasion are lenten, are invariably included in sacrificial offerings of the Abkhasians. They may be boiled, as on this occasion, or baked. *A-kərd* denotes "to hold". After it is called, in Abkhasian, the month of February, *khwazhwəkən-mzd* (*a-mza*, month, moon). *À-khwazhwə* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) denotes also rhododendron, the leaves of which are indispensable in the making of sacrificial maize-cakes.

[1] As a cult term this word is met with in the form ... in Sabaean (Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier*, ii, 24, 37, cf. p. 191, n. 179), see N. Marr, *The Baptism of the Armenians, Georgians, Abkhasians and Alans*, etc. (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Pb., 1908, vol. xvi, p. 203. (Ed. *Christ. Vost.*)

[2] The Megrelians call this Monday *t'at'ashkha beduieri*, lucky, or happy Monday, lit. the moon-day. With the Abkhasians, too, *Ayt'ar's* day is Monday; they pray to the moon exclusively on Mondays.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

1796 *à-khwazhw* and entreats god *Alòshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warəpà* or *a-*
[240] *k'warpà* (a thick broth of *à-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue
[159] of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer.
[716] In the opinion of the commission, *Alòshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before
[231] "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

671 It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a
685 dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is
825 equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

539 From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkha-
231 sian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language, I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight." [1]

[807] The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri, vàri, khəzò, jkhwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri*
[192] (*vàri* from *aowyò*,* man) as man; *khəzò* as whey; *jkhwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

1716 (*d*) *Àmza-nəkwa*, Prayer to the Moon.
1796 The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

[104] * See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the production of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the guttural "ɔ" (the ancient Arabic '*ain*) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[171] [1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Ara* (cf. *Alòshkintr*) licked the corpse of *Ara* or *Arsès*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha.

agreed. During the night God caused the earth to be covered with luxuriant vegetation. Captivated by the beauty of vegetation the devil suggested to God that the best way to divide the world between them would be for one to have the earth and the other the vegetation. God took as his share the earth, and the devil received the vegetation. God then ordered him to remove his vegetation immediately. Only now did the devil realize his mistake, which, however, he rectified thus: he restored the vegetation to God, and in return for it he begged and obtained from Him the right to the souls of those who fall from the trees, having climbed them without first praying to God for their safety. . . ."

(*b*) *Barbanjia* (*dchiakakona*)

Before sunset on the 14th August the Abkhasian youths light, in their respective courtyards, a fire of flax straw (at present, owing to the lack of this straw, they use dry fern, etc.). Each person leaps thrice through the flame of this fire, shouting " I have burnt the evil spirit; I have burnt the evil spirit ". By so leaping through the flame an Abkhaz " purifies " himself of the evil spirit. After they have leapt three times through the flame each throws a piece of salt into the burning fire, and then, altogether, they begin to beat the fire with sticks to extinguish it, at the same time shouting the above quoted words. At the conclusion of the whole operation, the neighbours inform each other of their victory over the evil spirit by firing a gun. This manner of destroying the evil spirits is called " the burning of the demon " or *Barbanjia*. The denotation of the word is incomprehensible to me.[1]

(*c*) *Nȧn-ḫwa*

On the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin, the " pure " (eldest) woman in the family prepares *a-tcha* (" a round bread stuffed with cheese "), boils a cock, and leads the whole family into the kitchen garden. Here they all kneel in front of the blossoming cucumber vine, and the eldest woman makes offering to Nan, saying: " the great Nan (*Nȧn-du*)! We who offer thee this sacrifice, established by our ancestors, humbly entreat thee to have mercy upon our house: increase it like the stars in the sky! " etc. The kneeling family repeat with her, *Ȧmen*. But no one knows who *Nan* (*Anan*) is; they only know that she is a goddess of procreation of the human race. Of the Mother of God there is no knowledge whatever.

[1] The Georgian equivalent is *Dchiakakona*, which is observed on Ash-Wednesday. *Dchiakakona*, according to Tchubinov, denotes " the leaping through the fire on Wednesday of Passion-week ".

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Aázvibzha

Thus, the goddess
of the bees as a sign of her good disposition towards a given family placed an egg (the egg of *Anàna-gùnda*) in one of the hives. No matter how much honey they took from that hive, there would always be a plentiful supply of it.[1]

IV. K'IRSA

Christmas is one of the four chief holidays[2] of the year. Abkhasians call it *K'irsa* (Megr. *K'irse*), which denotes Christ. An Abkhaz considers it a great disgrace if he fails on this day to kill a goat or some other animal. On this day "the table is laid" also for the souls of ancestors.

(a) *Agwə-nə̀hwa*

For some families it is obligatory to make an offering early in the morning on this day to *Agwə-nə̀hwa*, for which *akwakwdr* are baked. The supplicant entreats that *Agwə-nə̀hwa* grant them the warmth of his eyes and his heart. In translation the word denotes, "praying to heart." This "praying" is also known to the Gurians, under the name of "praying for the womb" (Geo. *Mutslis salotsavi*); Megrelians call it *Khatsitsi*.[3] According to I. Kipshidze, it is the New Year's Day breakfast.[4] In my opinion it is nothing more than a survival of the supplication described below.

(b) *Got'anùa* (*sharp'ə-nə̀hwa*)

Some *gvari*-s have preserved to this day the following custom. On Christmas Eve, the family go to bed very early; they rise, however, at midnight, and begin praying. Enough chickens are killed to provide one for every member of the family (blackbirds also may be used), or in their place a young goat; *akwakwdr* baked. All this is offered to *Got'anùa*; the food is consumed immediately after the prayer is ended, and the remains, if any, are not left but burnt without fail. All return to bed. The dawn must find them asleep. In Megrelian *got'ànua* denotes morning-twilight, dawn, to grow light, to dawn, the Abkhasian equivalent of which is *sharp'-nə̀hwa*, the morning prayer; the Megrelian term, however, is more in use.

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family,

[1] *Anàna*, in my opinion, is derived from *an*, mother; *gùnda*, probably from *gundi*, a swarm, a collection of something.

[2] Namely, the New Year, Easter, the Assumption, and Christmas.

[3] *Khatsitsi—khatsetsi* is called also a bride. (Cf. I. Kipshidze, *Gram. of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. *khat'ets'i*.) (Ed. *Khrist. Vostok*.)

[4] *Grammar of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. (where is also a reference to the explanation of the same word in Georgian by V. Beridze, *Sitqvishone*, s.v., Ed. *Kh. V.*).